

**Minutes of a meeting of the
Joint Strategic Committee
Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils**

QEII Room, Shoreham Centre

11 January 2022

Councillor Neil Parkin (Chairman)

Adur District Council:

Councillor Angus Dunn
Councillor Carson Albury
Councillor Brian Boggis
Councillor Kevin Boram
Councillor Emma Evans

Worthing Borough Council:

Councillor Kevin Jenkins
Councillor Edward Crouch
Councillor Sean McDonald
*Councillor Dr Heather Mercer
Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes
Councillor Nicola Waight

**Member not present*

Other Members Present

Adur District Council:- Councillor Gabe Crisp

Worthing Borough Council:- Councillors Becky Cooper, Helen Silman, Emma Taylor and Vicki Wells

JSC/71/21-22 Declarations of Interests

Councillor Elizabeth Sparkes declared an interest in item 7 as an elected member of West Sussex County Council.

Councillor Neil Parkin declared an interest in item 6 as his son was on the Kickstart programme.

Councillor Ed Crouch declared an interest in item 9 as a Board Member for Worthing Homes.

JSC/72/21-22 Minutes

Resolved, that the minutes from the Joint Strategic Committee meeting held on 7 December 2021, were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

JSC/73/21-22 Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

There were no items raised under urgency provisions.

Before the Committee was a report by the Chief Executive, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as Item 5.

“Platforms for our Places: Going Further” was the Councils’ ambitious strategic programme designed to help create the healthy, prosperous and well connected communities Adur and Worthing residents and businesses had told the Councils they wanted to see.

The report updated the Joint Strategic Committee, describing the ongoing strong progress made by the Councils in achieving these commitments over the past 6 months.

The report reflected the Councils’ shift from pandemic ‘response’ to ‘Autumn and Winter recovery’ and described the continuing impact of the pandemic on local communities. Whilst progress against some of the commitments had slowed because of the pandemic, most were on track and some had accelerated.

The Councils continued to embed the lessons they had learned from the pandemic, using these to better support local communities and advance the Councils strategic ambitions.

Moving forward, the Councils would be gathering learning from the Platforms activity in order to feed into the next strategy cycle.

A Member asked the following questions in relation to Platform 3. Officers agreed to provide written responses following the meeting which would also be shared with the Committee membership:-

- Solar Together :- during the second round over 400 households in Adur and Worthing registered an interest to have PV and/or battery storage installed in their homes. How many households had taken it up?
- LAD Grant Programme :- 900 homes across the South East had benefited. How many of these were in Worthing?
- Nature Restoration and Protection :- The bullet point at the bottom of page 37 of the agenda pack stated *‘The Councils were also part of a wider project across West and East Sussex. The locations selected to be a part of this project includes Steyne Gardens, Kingston Beach and Buckingham Park with links to the Local Nature Partnership and Health objectives across the region. All aspects of these projects are connected with the local communities and key stakeholders and will define a baseline assessment of the natural conditions of these locations and then work alongside the local community to create a set of recommendations that will include how to fund them’*. What was this project and was the Council going to fund it?

Officers agreed to provide written responses to the questions following the meeting. The Leader of Adur District Council requested that the responses also be shared with the Committee membership.

Another Member asked the following questions in relation to the report;

- Paragraph 6.25 of the report considered recycling rates across Adur and Worthing. What were the actual figures and how did the Councils compare with other authorities?
- Paragraph 6.28 of the report considered leadership support for senior managers. Was there any information on the outcomes for those managers in terms of progression, promotion etc?

Officers agreed to provide written responses to the questions following the meeting. The Leader of Adur District Council requested that the responses also be shared with the Committee membership.

The Committee welcomed the report and congratulated Officers for all of the work undertaken over the last 18 months in particularly difficult circumstances.

The recommendation, as set out in the report, was unanimously supported by the Committee.

Decision

The Joint Strategic Committee noted and considered the “Platforms for our Places: Going Further” 6 months progress report (July to December 2021) and agreed to refer the report to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 21st January 2022.

JSC/76/21-22 Proactive interventions to support low income residents

Before the Committee was a report by the Interim Director for Communities, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as Item 6.

This report updated the Committee, describing changes in the national and local context since the last report; the Proactive team’s progress since then; the ways in which this work has been connected to other pandemic related support and outlined next steps. It also included the financial impacts that residents had experienced over the months this work had been underway.

A Member asked questions in relation to the cost of the ‘Lift’ tool, the contact methods used to reach residents, plans for ongoing support when Covid funding ended and which partner organisations cases were being referred to. Officers advised that the cost of the system was £35k per annum which included the Lift tool and benefits calculators for residents and staff. There wasn’t a timeline for the dataset’s inclusion of Universal Credit information, however, there was a lot of work being undertaken by Policy in Practice to include this and the situation would be monitored closely over the coming 6 to 12 months. In regards to Covid funding, the Councils had been working on the basis that the funding was available until the end of March 2022. The Councils had recently been advised that part of it could be carried forward to the summer but were awaiting a response in regards to the remainder of this funding. It was also noted that cases were referred onto a range of other organisations and Officers would provide additional data following the meeting.

During discussion, Members sought clarification in regards to the inclusion of St Nicholas and Buckingham Wards in the 'top 5' wards with the highest percentage of households who were 'not coping'. Officers agreed to arrange a briefing session for Members with a deeper dive into the Lift Programme Tool and for Policy in Practice to come and answer some of the more in depth questions.

The Committee also considered the tracking of costs per intervention, tracking of gender engagement figures, the importance of data analysis and requested that an update be brought back to the Committee in 6 months rather than 12 months as proposed in the report.

Decision

The Joint Strategic Committee noted the contents of the report and requested that the Interim Director for Communities report back in 6 months on progress with the roadmap / next steps outlined.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 21st January 2022.

** Councillors Carson Albury, Brian Boggis, Kevin Boram, Angus Dunn and Emma Evans left the meeting at 7.13pm in accordance with the Joint Committee Agreement.*

JSC/77/21-22 Council Tax Support Schemes for Worthing Borough Council in respect of 2022/23 & 2023/24

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as Item 7.

The report related to the Council Tax Support schemes for Worthing Borough Council in respect of 2022/23 and 2023/24. It had been produced following the decision made by the Joint Strategic Committee on 7 December 2021 that officers should provide further details about options for:-

Enhancing the budget for discretionary awards during 2022/23; and

Removing the £5.00 weekly restriction from 1 April 2023 and the associated timescales.

A Member queried the timeline for consultation with precept bodies, suggesting that this commence sooner than May 2022. Officers advised that the consultation was in respect of the 2023/24 scheme and that it could commence sooner, if requested by Members.

Clarification was sought in relation to the number of households that would be supported by the additional discretionary awards totalling £100k. It was noted that an additional investment of £100k into the hardship fund would support between 760 households (at £260) and 1,300 households (at £150). This would provide support to all customers identified in the 'struggling', 'at risk' and 'in crisis' categories whilst also providing a safety net for those currently coping but whose circumstances may change. It was noted that the cost of providing support (at £260) to all Working Age Council Tax Support customers, of which there were currently 3,328, would require a budget of around £870k

which would equate to an 8.7% increase in Council Tax. The Council was limited to an increase in Council Tax of 2% due to the referendum criteria.

Decision

The Joint Strategic Committee

1. noted the content of the report;
2. approved an accelerated commencement of the consultation with the precepting bodies for the development of the 2023/24 Council Tax Support scheme;
3. noted that a further report would be presented to Committee in June outlining the options for a new scheme and the public consultation approach; and
4. approved the release of £100,000 from the Capacity Issues Reserve to increase the hardship fund for 2022/23.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for decisions will be 5.00pm on the 21st January 2022.

JSC/78/21-22 Worthing Pier - Emergency Works

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for the Economy, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as Item 8.

The report provided an update to the Committee on the direct award of a contract for emergency works to the Pier and landing stage sub-structure under Standing Orders 8.3 Special Circumstances and Emergencies - 8.3.3 for Emergency Works, and updated the Committee on the ongoing situation.

Decision

The Joint Strategic Committee

1. noted the award of the contract for emergency works to the Pier and landing stage sub-structure under Standing Orders 8.3 Special Circumstances and Emergencies - 8.3.3 for Emergency Works; and
2. noted the ongoing emergency works in available tidal windows to the Pier and landing stage sub-structures.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 21st January 2022.

JSC/79/21-22 Referral of motion on notice from Worthing Borough Council

Before the Committee was a report by the Interim Director for Communities, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as Item 9.

The report set out a motion (attached as Appendix 1) referred from the meeting of Worthing Borough Council on the 14th December 2021. Members of the Joint Strategic committee were asked to consider and determine the Motion. The Committee was

advised that it could either support the motion and ask for further work to be carried out in this regard, or, it could reject the motion.

Councillor Emma Taylor attended the meeting to present the motion to the Committee.

Members thanked Cllr Taylor for her motion, acknowledging that its sentiment was well meaning. However, Members highlighted that the motion requested a number of things that the Council and existing legislation already did and the Committee paid tribute to the Council's Housing Staff who were providing excellent support and advice through initiatives such as the Opening Doors Project.

Therefore, it was proposed by Councillor Kevin Jenkins and seconded by Councillor Ed Crouch that the motion be rejected.

Decision

That the Joint Strategic Committee rejected the motion.

Call In:

The call-in deadline for the decision will be 5.00pm on the 21st January 2022.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 7.56 pm, it having commenced at 6.30 pm

Chairman